

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3130

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3040

ARA/LA/MRSD O'GRADY PASS SUBSTANCE TO AIFLD AND AFL-CIO
MCCLELLAN

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT, ELAB

SUBJECT: LABOR DAY PLANS PROVOKE CONTROVERSY

REF: SANTIAGO 2787

1. SUMMARY: APPROACH OF CHILE'S MAY 1 LABOR DAY (REFTEL)
OCCASIONED CONTROVERSY CENTERED AROUND FOUR MAJOR LABOR LEADERS
GOC ACCUSED OF BOYCOTTING CAUPOLICAN THEATER ASSEMBLY BY
ORGANIZING DIVERSIONARY RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS AND SPORTING
EVENTS. FOUR RESIGNED THEIR POSITIONS IN NATIONAL LABOR
ADVISORY COUNCIL IN TWO STORMY SESSIONS WITH LABOR MINISTRY
OFFICIALS. LABOR MINISTER DIAZ CASTIGATED THEM IN SEVERE AND
RUDE MANNER IN SESSION WHERE ABOUT 15 OF THEIR COLLEAGUES
WERE PRESENT.

2. PRESS REPORTS GOC NOW PLANS TO HOLD SEPARATE CEREMONY FOR
PROMULGATION OF NEW LABOR LEGISLATION. NOT CLEAR WHETHER
PRESIDENT PINOCHET WILL ATTEND OR SPEAK AT CAUPOLICAN AFFAIR.

3. MOST LABOR LEADERS PRIVATELY REPORT THEY WILL BE PRESENT
AT LATTER ASSEMBLY. THREE OF FOUR CASTIGATED LEADERS INDICATE
THEY WILL ATTEND, TWO FOR FEAR MINISTER DIAZ WOULD HOLD THEM
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RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY MAY 1 INCIDENTS OR VIOLENCE. END SUMMARY.

4. APRIL 23 UNDERSEC LABOR MINISTRY LUIS RIVALLTA ASKED FOUR OF MAJOR LEABOR LEADERS (ALL MEMBERS OF NAT. LABOR ADVISORY COUNCIL) TO OFFICE AND ACCUSED EACH OF "SABOTAGING GOC PLANS FOR LABOR DAY CELEBRATION". DRESSING DOWN OF FOUR (EDUARDO RIOS OF MARITIME CONFED, ERNESTO VOGEL OF RAILROAD FED., TUCAPEL JIMENEZ OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND FEDERICO MUJICA OF WHITE COLLAR CONFED) WAS DESCRIBED BY VOGEL AND MUJICA TO LABATT AS SEVERE AND RUDE. ACCORDING TO LATTER ALL WERE ACCUSED OF ORGANIZING SEPARATE EVENTS WHICH WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE "OFFICIAL CELEBRATION IN CAUPOLICAN THEATRE" (REFTEL).

5. ALL FOUR LEADERS REPORTEDLY OFFERED THEIR RESIGNATIONS FROM NAT. ADV. COUNCIL. THEY ALSO REQUESTED AUDIENCE WITH MIN. LABOR, AND VERSIONS OF THIS MEETING HELD APRIL 28 FROM VOGEL, JIMENEZ AND MUJICA ARE SUBSTANTIALY SAME.

6. LEADERS SAY TONE AND TACTICS OF LABOR MINISTER DIAZ WERE VIOLENT AND ABUSIVE AND THAT CRITICISMS WERE MADE IN PRESENCE OF ABOUT 15 OTHER LABOR LEADERS. RIBALTA'S CHARGES WERE REPEATED IN MUCH MORE SEVERE LANGUAGE. JIMENEZ WAS CASTIGATED IN FRONT OF GROUP AS "OLD FOOL WHO HAD LEARNED NOTHING IN 29 YEARS AS LABOR LEADER". VOGEL AND RIOS WERE ACCUSED OF BEING WILLING TOOLS OF BOTH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (PDC) AND COMMUNISTS (PCCH).

7. ALL FOUR REPEATED THAT THEY WERE RESIGNING FROM COUNCIL, BUT MINISTER REFUSED TO ACCEPT RESIGNATIONS. HE REPORTEDLY SAID: "I RUN THE COUNCIL AND I RUN LABOR, AND I WILL DECIDE AT THE OPPORTUNE TIME WHO RESIGNS." HE THEN TOLD THEM HE HAD REPORTS THAT THE PDC AND PC INTENDED TO PROVOKE INCIDENTS (AGITACIONES) AT THE CATHOLIC MASSES FOR LABOR MAY 1 AND THAT HE WAS HOLDING THE FOUR RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED. ALSO SAID THEY WERE NOT INVITED OR ORDERED TO ATTEND THE CAUPOLICAN AFFAIR -- THAT IT WAS ONLY FOR THOSE LABOR LEADERS "WHO CARED ABOUT WORKERS."

8. PRESS APRIL 30 INDICATES THAT GOC NOW HAS ORGANIZED SMALLER CEREMONY AT SEAT OF GOVERNMENT FOR 1800 ON MAY 1
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TO PROMULGATE SOCIAL STATUTE OF ENTERPRISE AND POSSIBLY PRESENT NEW LABOR CODE. THERE ARE VARIED REPORTS FROM THE LEADERS ORGANIZING CAUPOLICAN AFFAIR THAT GENERAL PINOCHET WILL NOT MAKE AN APPEARANCE AS ORIGINALLY REPORTED, OR THAT IF HE DOES, WILL NOT SPEAK.

9. GOC SPOKESMEN ARE STILL TRYING TO MAINTAIN LINE THAT CAUPOLICAN ASSEMBLY IS AN ACT GENERATED AND ORGANIZED EXCLU-

SIVELY BY LABOR LEADERS. MINISTER DIAZ IS QUOTED AS SAYING
"I HAVE RECEIVED AN INVITATION AND HAVE ACCEPTED WITH
PLEASURE...IF I AM ASKED TO SPEAK (HE HAS REPEATEDLY STATED
TO PRESS FOR PAST TWO WEEKS THAT HE WILL ADDRESS ASSEMBLY)
I WILL DISCUSS THE GOVERNMENT'S LABOR POLICY."

10. COMMENT: THE FOUR LABOR LEADERS TO SOME DEGREE HAVE EARNED
MINISTER'S IRE. THEY ARE GENUINELY MIFFED AT GOC TACTIC OF
GIVING SMALL AND NON-REPRESENTATIVE ELEMENTS OF UNION MOVEMENT
EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANIZING LABOR DAY PROGRAM.
THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT PAST EFFORTS TOWARD ESTABLISHING
WORKABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOC HAVE FAILED AND FEEL INCREASED
PRESSURE FROM THEIR BASES TO EXTRACT MORE BENEFITS FROM THIS
GOVERNMENT. THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THEIR ORGANIZION
OF CHURCH SERVICES AND SPORTS EVENTS IS DIVERSIONARY EFFORT
THAT SERVES TO BOYCOTT OFFICIAL CELEBRATION, AND AT SAME TIME
OFFER SOME EVIDENCE TO WORKERS THAT LEADERS HAVE NOT SOLD
OUT TO GOC.

11. MINISTER DIAZ' TANTRUM CLIMAXES SERIES OF SIMILAR BUT
LESS SEVERE CONFRONTATIONS WITH LEADERS WHERE HE HAS DISPLAYED
INCREASING IMPATIENCE WITH THOSE WHO FAIL TO FOLLOW GOC
LINE. HE APPEARS STILL TO THINK THAT LABOR SHOULD FOLLOW
GOVERNMENT DICTATES OR SUGGESTIONS WITHOUT QUESTION, AND TO
BE SURPRISED -- AND INCENSED -- WHEN INDEPENDENCE IS SHOWN.
ABUSIVE LANGUAGE TO FOUR MAJOR LEADERS IN PRESENCE OF THEIR
PEERS APPEARS INTENDED TO IMPRESS OTHERS WITH GOC WILL.

12. MOST HERE EXPECT THAT CAUPOLICAN THEATER WILL BE FILLED
WITH NON-LABOR MASSES OVER WHOM GOC HAS TIGHT CONTROL. THERE
WILL PROBABLY BE A SIZEABLE CONTINGENT OF LEGITIMATE LABOR
LEADERS, INCLUDING PROBABLY THREE OF THE FOUR SUBJECT
MAVERICKS. TWO OF THE FOUR HAVE INDICATED TO US THEY WILL
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ATTEND SIMPLY AS A FORM OF "INSURANCE". THEY FEAR THAT
EITHER PLANNED, SPONTANEOUS OR PROVOKED INCIDENTS ON LABOR
DAY WOULD PROVIDE GOC PRETEXT FOR MAKING EXAMPLE OF THEM.
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